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DEPT FOR SCA/INS, DRL

E.O. 12958: DECL: 12/07/2017

TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PREF](#) [PHUM](#) [KIRF](#) [PINR](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: A/S SAUERBREY MEETS THE DALAI LAMA

Classified By: A/PolCouns Atul Keshap for reasons 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. Summary: On November 10, Population, Refugee, and Migration Assistant Secretary Ellen Sauerbrey met His Holiness the Dalai Lama in Dharamsala. The Dalai Lama shared his favorable views on resettling Tibetan refugees in Western countries, which differs from those of some members of the Tibetan community who believe resettlement in the West would weaken Tibetan culture. The Dalai Lama agreed to weigh in with the GOI to seek to waive exit permit requirements so Tibetans escaping into Nepal and from there crossing into India can more easily move to the U.S. as refugees. End Summary.

Resettling Refugees in the West  
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¶2. (C) In a November 10 meeting with A/S Sauerbrey the Dalai Lama expressed his enthusiasm regarding the resettlement of the Tibetan refugees, both in Nepal and in India. The Dalai Lama noted, however, that some members of the Tibetan community felt that resettlement in Western countries would weaken Tibetan culture. They would like to see Indian settlements as the center of Tibetan culture. Based on his experiences with Tibetans in Switzerland, the Dalai Lama opined that Tibetans living abroad could hold onto their Tibetan spirit. He continued that Tibetans should look to other countries since economic development and self-reliance is very important for the future of the Tibetan people. The Dalai Lama noted that he had a good relationship with the Prime Minister of India, who had expressed support for third-country resettlement for the Tibetan refugees.

Tibetans Stuck in Nepal  
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¶3. (C) A/S Sauerbrey urged the Dalai Lama to raise the issue of the long-term Tibetan refugees lacking legal status in Nepal with the GOI and indicated the USG's continued willingness to discuss resettling those refugees in the United States. She conveyed Nepalese Prime Minister Girija Prasad Koirala's comments on the resettlement of a few especially vulnerable Tibetan refugees in Nepal to the U.S.

and discussed the problem of exit permits (Reftel). (Note: The Government of Nepal has refused to grant exit permits to some 20,000 Tibetan refugees in Nepalese camps reportedly due to PRC pressure. This has stalled the resettlement process. The GON would prefer that the Tibetans simply cross the open border with India and proceed to the United States. However, Tibetans arriving in India from Nepal without documents from the GON cannot legally obtain exit permits from the GOI. End Note.) A/S Sauerbrey urged the Dalai Lama to seek agreement from the GOI to waive Nepali exit permits so the Tibetans can travel onward to the United States. The Dalai Lama agreed to contact the GOI on this matter.

¶4. (C) Comment: If the Dalai Lama can move the GOI on documentation requirements for Tibetans arriving from Nepal, PRM can begin resettling Tibetan refugees in the foreseeable future. The Dalai Lama sees the lack of opportunity for upward mobility as a crisis facing the Tibetan people. Because of the limited possibilities Tibetans have in the current settlement camps, resettlement is a viable option in addressing this problem. End Comment.

¶5. (U) A/S Sauerbrey did not clear on this cable, but members of her staff did review it prior to its transmission.  
MULFORD